

What is claimed is:

1. A drive circuit for driving a switching element comprising:
a high-side switching circuit connected between power
5 supply lines;
a low-side switching circuit connected in series with said
high-side switching circuit through an output terminal leading to
the switching element; and
a voltage detector detecting a voltage appearing at the output
10 terminal,
wherein said low-side switching circuit is controlled to be
turned off when the voltage detected by said voltage detector is lower
than an off-decision voltage which is defined within a voltage range
in which the switching element is in an off-state.
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2. A drive circuit as set forth in claim 1, wherein said low-side
switching circuit includes an output transistor, a predriver driving
the output transistor, a comparing circuit comparing the output
voltage detected by said voltage detector with the off-decision voltage,
20 and a logic circuit controlling an operation of the predriver base on a
result of comparison in the comparing circuit.
3. A drive circuit as set forth in claim 2, wherein the comparing
circuit is implemented by a comparator.
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4. A drive circuit as set forth in claim 2, wherein the comparing

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circuit includes a decision transistor having a control terminal into which the output voltage detected by said voltage detector is inputted.

5 5. A drive circuit as set forth in claim 1, wherein said voltage detector is implemented by a voltage divider made up of resistors.

6. A drive circuit for driving a switching element comprising:
 a high-side switching circuit connected between power
 10 supply lines;
 a low-side switching circuit connected in series with said high-side switching circuit through an output terminal leading to the switching element; and
 a voltage detector detecting a voltage appearing at the output
 15 terminal;

wherein said high-side switching circuit is turned off when the voltage detected by said voltage detector is higher than an on-decision voltage which is defined within a voltage range in which the switching element is in an on-state.

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7. A drive circuit as set forth in claim 6, wherein said high-side switching circuit includes an output transistor, a predriver driving the output transistor, a comparing circuit comparing the output voltage detected by said voltage detector with the on-decision voltage,
 25 and a logic circuit controlling an operation of the predriver base on a result of comparison in the comparing circuit.

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8. A drive circuit as set forth in claim 7, wherein the comparing circuit is implemented by a comparator.

5 9. A drive circuit as set forth in claim 7, wherein the comparing circuit includes a decision transistor having a control terminal into which the output voltage detected by said voltage detector is inputted.

10 10. A drive circuit as set forth in claim 6, wherein said voltage detector is implemented by a voltage divider made up of resistors.

11. A drive circuit for driving a switching element comprising:
a high-side switching circuit connected between power
15 supply lines;
a low-side switching circuit connected in series with said high-side switching circuit through an output terminal leading to the switching element; and
a voltage detector detecting a voltage appearing at the output
20 terminal;

wherein said low-side switching circuit is turned off when the voltage detected by said voltage detector is lower than an off-decision voltage which is defined within a voltage range in which the switching element is turned off, and

25 wherein said high-side switching circuit is turned off when the voltage detected by said voltage detector is higher than an

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on-decision voltage which is defined within a voltage range in which the switching element is turned on.

12. A drive circuit as set forth in claim 11, wherein said low-side switching circuit includes an output transistor, a predriver driving the output transistor, a comparing circuit comparing the output voltage detected by said voltage detector with the off-decision voltage, and a logic circuit controlling an operation of the predriver base on a result of comparison in the comparing circuit.

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13. A drive circuit as set forth in claim 11, wherein said high-side switching circuit includes an output transistor, a predriver driving the output transistor, a comparing circuit comparing the output voltage detected by said voltage detector with the on-decision voltage, and a logic circuit controlling an operation of the predriver base on a result of comparison in the comparing circuit.

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14. A drive circuit as set forth in claim 13, wherein the comparing circuit includes a decision transistor having a control terminal into which the output voltage detected by said voltage detector is inputted.

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15. A drive circuit as set forth in claim 11, wherein said voltage detector is implemented by a voltage divider made up of resistors.

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